

Both Australia and the U.K. emphasize the importance of getting input from the public. Australia encourages "info-philanthropy" and recommends a tax deduction for sharing data. Australia also encourages employees to engage online and to experiment with new ideas. The U.K. is opening up data from both the central government and local councils making cross-jurisdictional information integration easier. The U.K. also emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility, taking action on the information to improve life outcomes.

Australia

The Australian report, *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0*

(<http://gov2.net.au/files/2009/12/Draft-Government-2-0-Report-release.pdf>)

is a draft report prepared by the Government 2.0 Taskforce of policy/technical experts/entrepreneurs from government, business, academia, and cultural institutions. The final report will be published December 31st.

The report outlines a series of recommendations that reflect principles similar to those outlined in the Open Government Directive. The central recommendation of the report is that the government should issue a declaration on Open Government. Specific recommendations include:

Government information is a national resource that should be free and open so that others can take the data in any form and transform it. Public information, as a national resource, should be released as pro-actively as possible. The default position will be automatic disclosure of any information that is not restricted by privacy or security concerns. Open standards will make the data accessible, reusable and discoverable

Technology will be used to increase collaboration in making policy and providing service. Using collaborative technology for a more consultative, participatory and transparent government will open up government decision making and implementation to contributions from the community and promote an informed, connected and democratic community.

Online engagement by public employees is actively encouraged/enabled.

This will prompt innovative proposals for greater engagement and participation with the community and foster a culture that allows employees to experiment and develop new opportunities for engagement. Individual public servants and agencies will be awarded for recognizing best practices.

A lead agency will be appointed to champion the effort across government, offering agencies coaching and resources. Best practices will show interested parties what is possible. The taskforce notes that leadership is crucial to make the culture shift, which cannot be effected just by changing the law.

Information philanthropy will be encouraged because some of the most successful experiments in Government 2.0 have been fuelled by not-for-profits in other countries. Policy-makers should make info-philanthropy eligible to qualify as a charitable deduction for taxes and other purposes.

(Australia just announced the winners of the **MashupAustralia** contest, which is similar to the Apps for Democracy contest)

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom report, *Putting the Frontline First: smarter government* (<http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/52788/smarter-government-final.pdf>) is a follow-up to the June 2009 report *Digital Britain* (<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/digitalbritain-finalreport-jun09.pdf>). Sir Tim Berners-Lee was commissioned by the government to help develop the report and a single data access point.

The report outlines a series of themes similar to principles delineated in the Open Government Directive. The central tenet of the report is the unprecedented release of public data in a move that the government hopes will drive innovation and improve public services. Over the next year the government will allow access to large swathes of data, including but not limited to health data, public transport data, and weather service data used for forecasting. The data will be available through a single access point at data.gov.uk, which will go live in January.

Drive up standards by strengthening the role of citizens and civic society.

This will be done by radically opening up data, not only from the central government but from local councils (this is a big difference from what the US government can compel), promoting transparency and encouraging personal responsibility. Encouraging personal responsibility is not discussed by the AU or US. The UK report states that “*Opening up information is an important step to empowering citizens to drive improvements in public services. However, it is the actions people take on this information that will improve life outcomes for themselves, their families and communities.*”

Free up public services by changing the relationship between the centre and the frontline.

The centre will do this by allowing local areas to have more control over setting priorities and guiding resources by simplifying performance management from the centre and increasing local flexibility over the use of resources; reducing burdens on the frontline, whether from reporting, inspection or assessment, with a focus on removing those burdens of least benefit to local people; and by harnessing the power of comparative data so that it is available to citizens and frontline professionals, and is at the centre of local scrutiny and simplified performance management systems.

Streamline government, saving money for improved service delivery and strategic focus. Emphasis will be on creating a sharper more innovative government; creating simpler, cheaper delivery structures, and improving services; improving back office practices; and managing assets more effectively (e.g. to release value from public sector assets and state-owned property with a more strategic approach to office location).

On December 30 the government announced a competition, with a £1million prize, for the best new technology platform that helps people come together to solve the problems that matter to them. The scale and depth of the contest has not been presented as of yet.